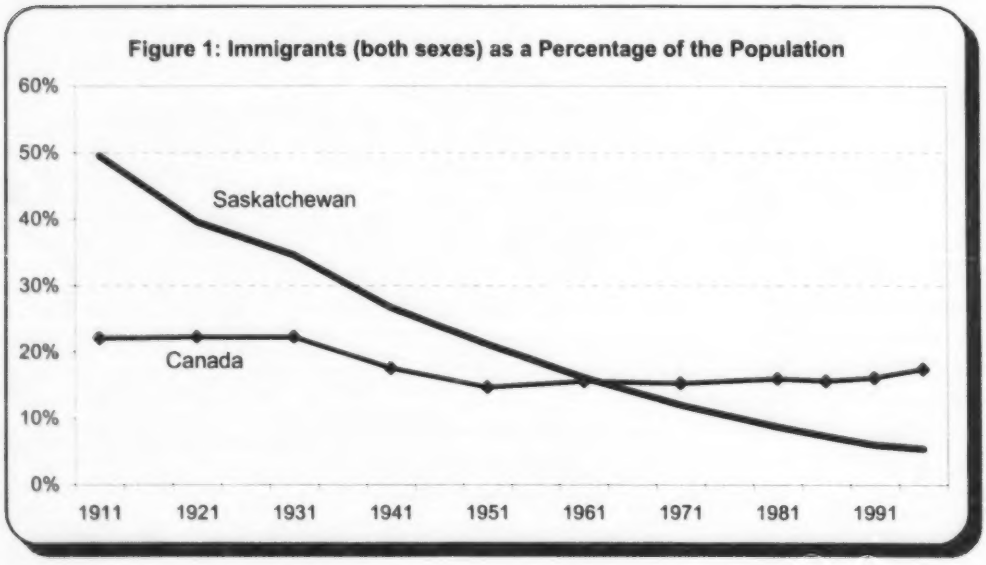
# Immigrant Women

A great many Saskatchewan residents are only one or two generations removed from people who moved to Canada from other countries. In the past two decades, however, the size and nature of immigration has changed and this change is documented in these statistics about immigrant women in the province.

Reliable statistical information about immigrant women is limited to the Statistics Canada Census which is conducted every five years. In the Census, a person is considered an immigrant if she has been granted landed immigrant status in Canada; in effect, immigrants are people who were born outside Canada. The definition excludes the 1,245 "non-permanent residents"[1] who lived in Saskatchewan in June 1996. Note that the statistics that follow are not about immigrants who came to Saskatchewan from other countries. Instead, they are about the 27,585 immigrant women who lived in the province as of June 1996, regardless of which province they immigrated to originally and regardless of when they arrived.

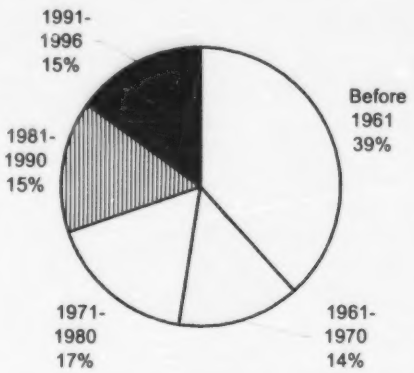
The number of immigrants in Saskatchewan is well below the national average and is falling because recent immigration rates are not as high as they were in the earlier decades. As Figure 1 shows, the proportion of the province's population born outside Canada has fallen from 50% in the early 1900s to 5% in 1996. By 1996, only 1.1% of immigrant women in Canada were living in Saskatchewan.

**Figure 1: Immigrants (both sexes) as a Percentage of the Population**



Women outnumber men in the immigrant population. In 1996, there were 27,600 immigrant women compared with 24,700 immigrant men – so 53% of immigrants in the province are women.

**Figure 2: Period of Immigration for Saskatchewan Immigrant Women**



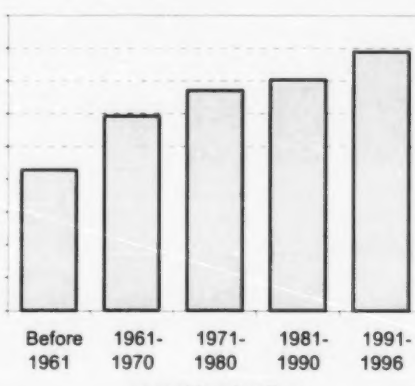

## Period of Immigration

Because migration has slowed in the recent past, most of Saskatchewan's immigrant women arrived in Canada several decades ago. As of 1996, more than one-half immigrated before 1971 (see Figure 2). Only 30% are what could be considered as "recent" immigrants in that they arrived in Canada after 1980. The socioeconomic characteristics of immigrant women vary dramatically according to the time they arrived in Canada.

## Residence

Regina and Saskatoon are common residences for immigrant women, especially recent immigrants. The Regina and Saskatoon Census Metropolitan Areas[2] or CMAs have only 41% of the women in the province but they are home to 59% of the immigrant women. Figure 3 shows that the proportion of immigrant women living in the two cities is near 80% among recent immigrants.

**Figure 3: Percent of Immigrant Women Living in Regina/Saskatoon CMAs, 1996**




## Country of Origin

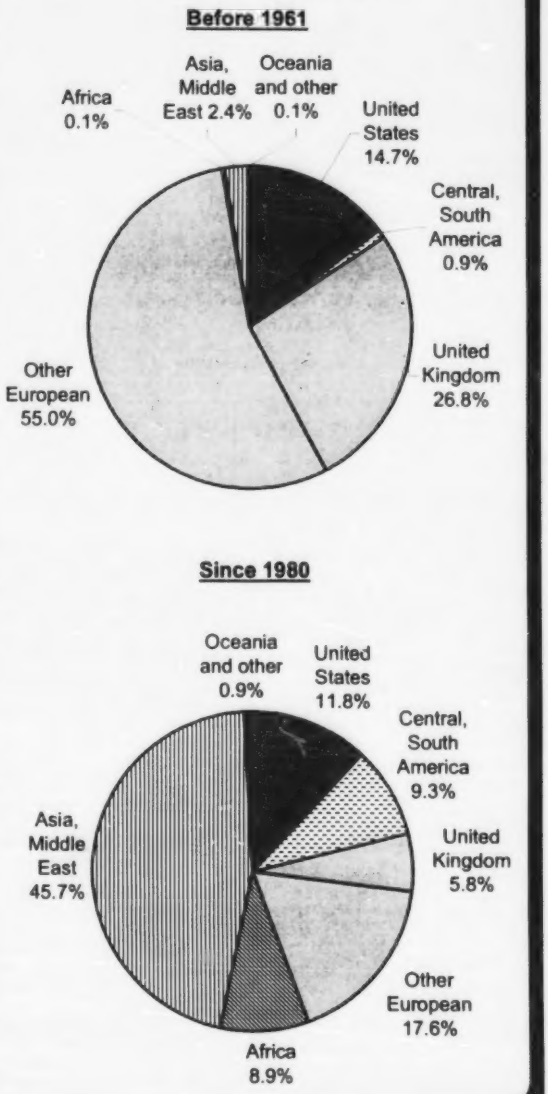
As immigration has slowed, the country of origin for the immigrants has changed as well. In earlier years, many of Saskatchewan's immigrant women were born in European countries. More recently, the trend is toward more from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

Among recent immigrants still living in Saskatchewan in 1996, almost one-half (46%) are from Asia and the Middle East (see Figure 4).

Over the entire period, however, women born in European countries, particularly the United Kingdom, still dominate the immigrant population, accounting for 54% of the total.

With the change in country of origin comes a difference in the visible minority status of immigrant women[3]. Less than 5% of immigrant women who came to Canada before 1961 were members of a visible minority group compared with more than 60% of recent immigrants.

**Figure 4: Immigrant Women in Saskatchewan by Place of Birth and Period of Immigration**




## Age Distribution

There are two interesting aspects of the age of immigrant women – their current age and their age when they immigrated. The two are, of course, related by the fact that recent immigrants tend to be younger. The current population of women who came to Canada before 1961 were necessarily quite young when they arrived.

Figure 5 shows that immigrant women who came to Canada before 1961 tended to be younger than recent immigrants – 60% were under 20 years of age when they came to Canada compared with 30% of recent immigrants. Almost one in five recent immigrants is 40 years of age or older.

**Figure 5: Age at Immigration for Immigrant Women Living in Saskatchewan, 1996**

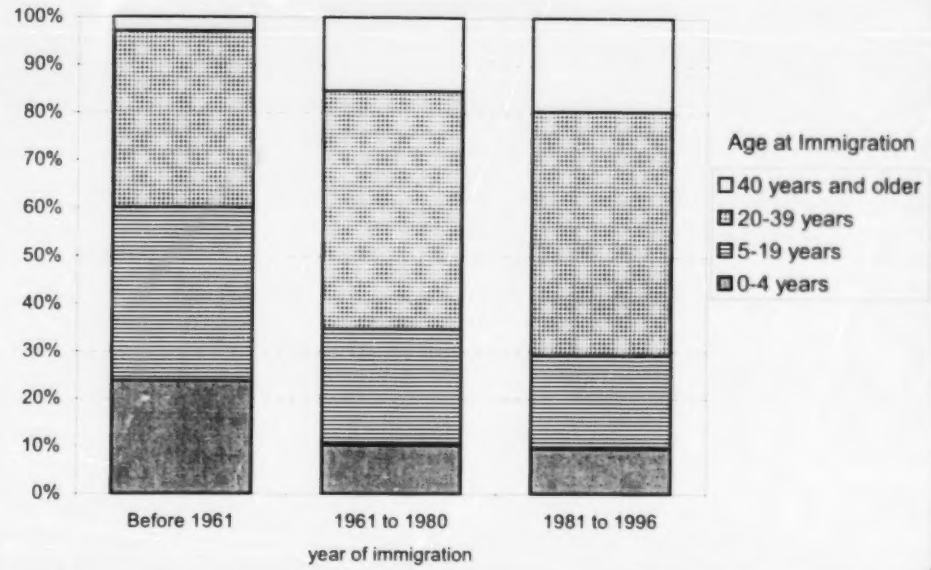
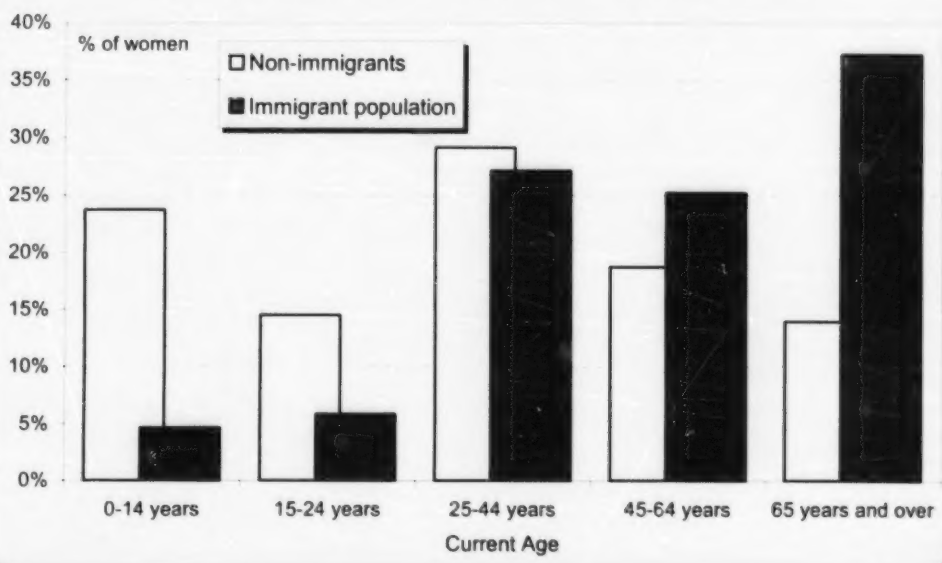
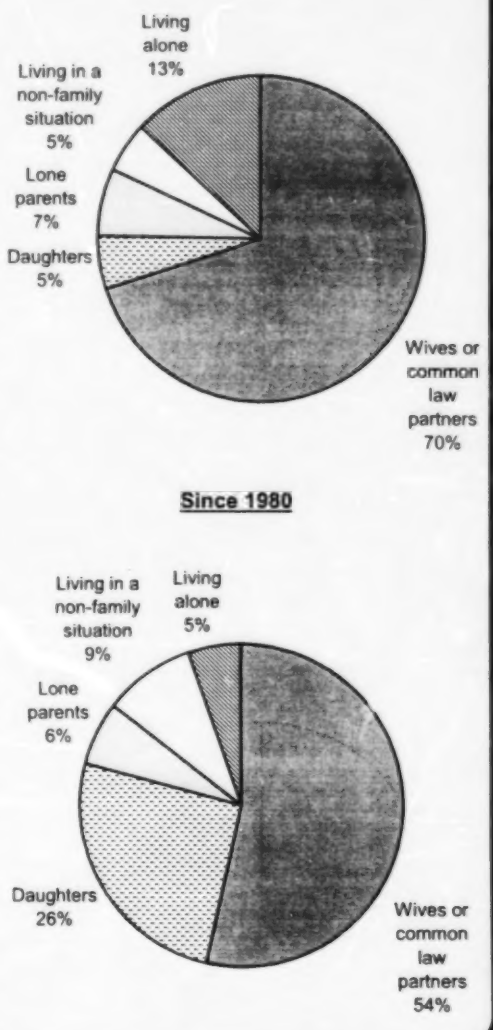



**Figure 6: Age Distribution of Saskatchewan Women in 1996**



This change in the age of new immigrants combined with the fact that the majority immigrated before 1970 leads to a higher average age among immigrant women. Figure 6 shows that 62% of immigrant women in Saskatchewan are 45 years of age or older compared with 33% of non-immigrant women.

**Figure 7: Family Status of Immigrant Women by Period of Immigration, 1996**




## Family Status

One consequence of the age distribution of the immigrant population is the nature of family structures. Three-quarters of women who immigrated to Canada before 1961 were seniors in 1996 and many are living alone. More than one-half (54%) of recent immigrants, on the other hand, are wives in husband-wife families or partners in a common law relationship (see Figure 7).

Overall, immigrant women are somewhat more likely than women born in Canada to be in a family arrangement (89% compared with 83%) and less likely to be living alone (3% compared with 11%). They are equally likely (7%) to be lone parents.

## Citizenship and Language

Three-quarters of immigrant women were Canadian citizens in 1996 although the proportion ranges from a high of 95% for women who immigrated before 1961 to a low of 19% among those who immigrated from 1991 to 1996.

English is the "mother tongue" among 43% of immigrant women and 30% of recent immigrants. But it has become the "home language" for 71% of immigrant women[4] and 47% of recent immigrants and is understood by 95% of immigrant women and 90% of recent immigrants.

## Mobility

After migrating to Canada, immigrant women are no more likely to move than their non-immigrant counterparts. Between 1991 and 1996, 39% of immigrant women changed their home, the same proportion as non-immigrant women.

## Education

Women who immigrated to Canada before 1961 are less likely than more recent immigrants to have, by 1996, a post-secondary degree, diploma, or certificate. About one in five (21%) are post-secondary graduates compared with 49% of those who immigrated between 1961 and 1980 and 43% of recent immigrants (see Figure 8). The average in the non-immigrant population is 37%.

(The data do not indicate whether the education was received before coming to Canada or after arriving.)

Immigrant women with a post-secondary degree, diploma, or certificate tend to specialize in somewhat different fields than women born in Canada (see Figure 9). Among the graduates and compared with non-immigrant women, immigrant women, especially recent immigrants, are more likely to have a degree, diploma, or certificate in science and technology. They are less likely to specialize in business and commerce or in education.

**Figure 8: Percentage of Adult Women with a Post-Secondary Degree, Diploma, or Certificate, 1996**

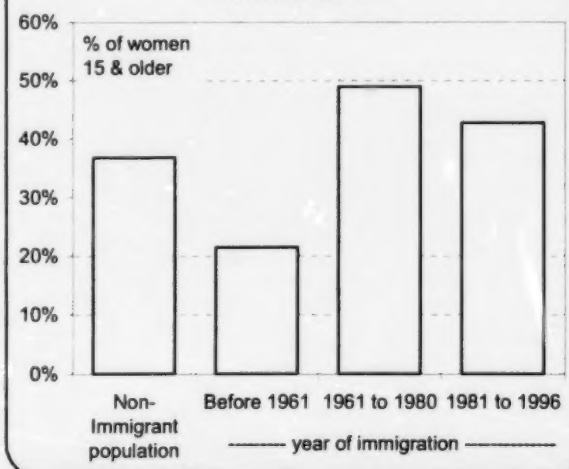
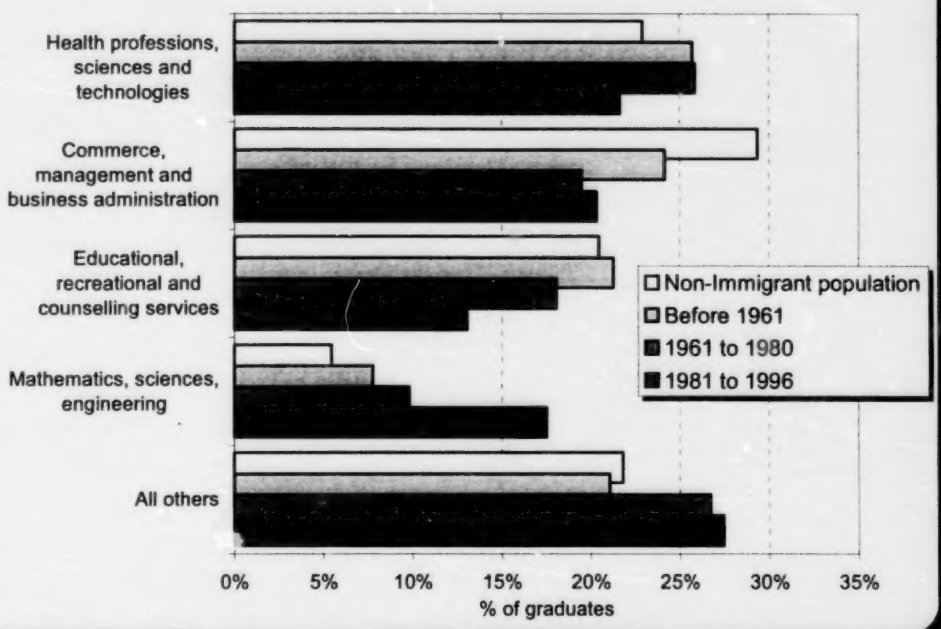
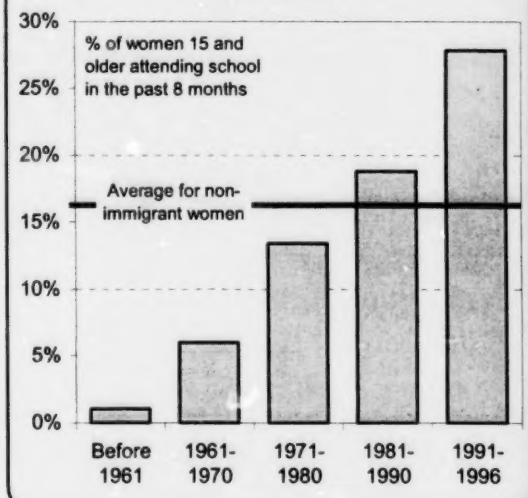


**Figure 9: Area of Specialization, Post-Secondary Graduates**




Recent arrivals are much more likely to be attending school (full-time or part-time, university or technical school) than women who migrated earlier or who were born in Canada (see Figure 10).

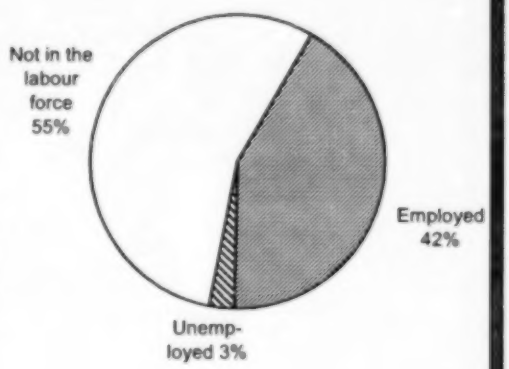
**Figure 10: School Attendance, Women, 1996**



## Employment

In the spring of 1996, approximately one-half of immigrant women were in the labour force, that is, either employed or unemployed (see Figure 11). This is a lower participation rate than among non-immigrant women where 61% were in the labour force[5]. Part of the reason is the higher average age among immigrant women. Among recent immigrants the participation rate is 60%, near the provincial average.

**Figure 11: Labour Force Status of Immigrant Women in June 1996**




The unemployment rate for recent immigrants (10%) is much higher than for non-immigrant women (7%) or women who migrated before 1980 (3% to 4%)[6].

Figure 12 shows the employment rate (the percentage of the adult population employed) for immigrant and non-immigrant women. The employment rate is much lower among women who came to Canada before 1961, largely because most of those women are past normal retirement age. The rate is higher than the provincial average among those who came in the 1960s and 1970s and somewhat lower than the provincial average for recent immigrants.

The most common industry in which immigrant women are employed is the health and social services group as it is for other Saskatchewan women[7]. There are substantial differences, as Figures 13 and 14 show, between recent immigrants and those who immigrated before 1980.

**Figure 12: Employment Rates for Saskatchewan Women, as of June 1996**

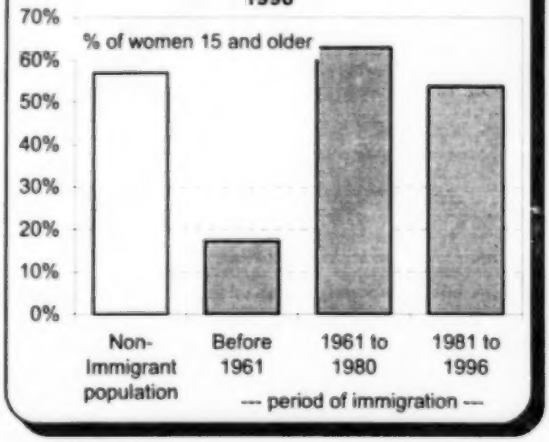
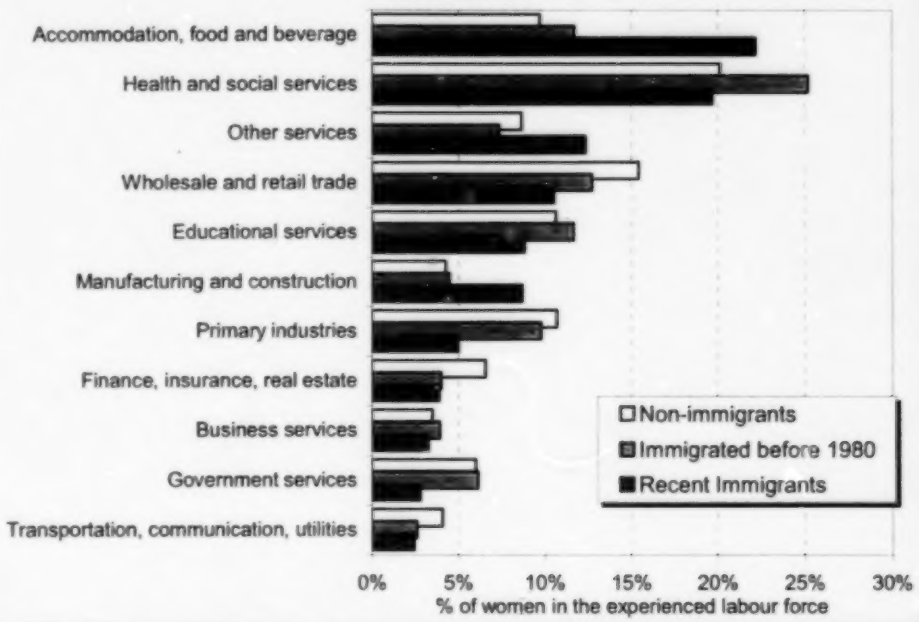


**Figure 13: Experienced Labour Force by Industry, Saskatchewan Women, 1996**




Recent immigrants, in spite of their high levels of completed education, are concentrated in low paying service sector industries such as accommodation and food services and "other" services, a category that includes domestic help. They are less likely than non-immigrant women to be employed in primary industries (including farming) and in government services (see Figure 13).

On an occupational level, recent immigrants are more likely than previous immigrants or women who were born in Canada to work in:

- business, finance, and administrative positions;
- social science, education, and government service occupations; or
- occupations unique to the primary industry (including farming).

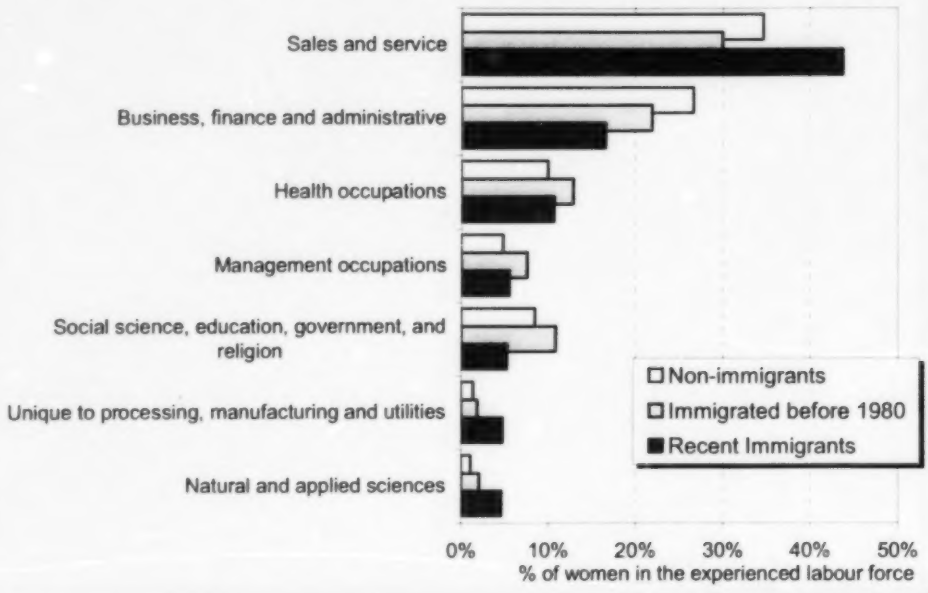
They are more likely to be working in:

- sales and service occupations;
- occupations in the processing and manufacturing industry; and
- occupations in natural and applied sciences.

*Employment by Industry and Occupation*

*Statistics for employment in industry and occupation groups require careful interpretation. The industry group refers to the type of business in which the person is employed whereas the occupation group refers to their duties. Many occupation groups cross industry boundaries. In the retail trade industry group, for example, there are people in managerial occupations as well as people in sales occupations and service occupations.*

**Figure 14: Experienced Labour Force by Occupation Group, Saskatchewan Women, 1996**




## Income

The examination of personal income levels for immigrant women is complex. On average, immigrant women had 1995 annual incomes above the average of their non-immigrant counterparts – $16,100 compared with $15,800. But these averages hide a great deal of variation.

**Figure 15: Sources for Personal Income, 1995, Saskatchewan Women**

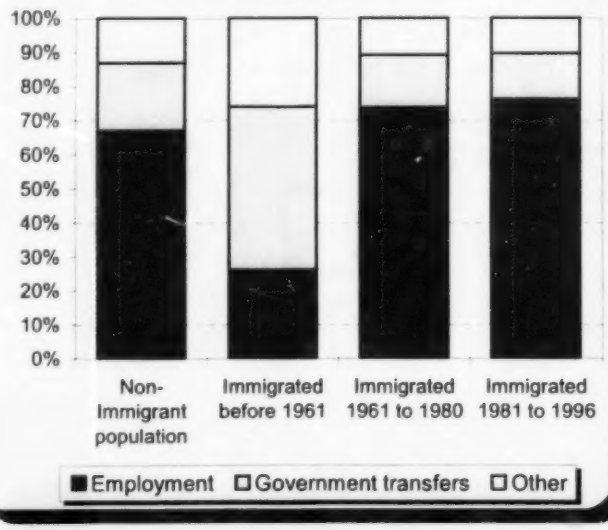
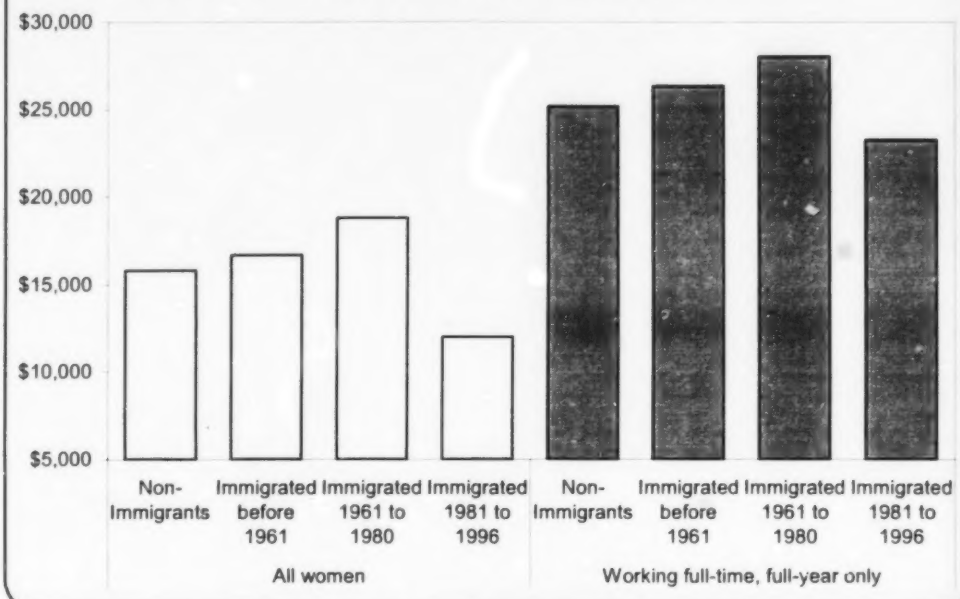


**Figure 16: Average Incomes in 1995, Saskatchewan Women**




The three different groups show dramatically different income characteristics as Figures 15 through 18 show.

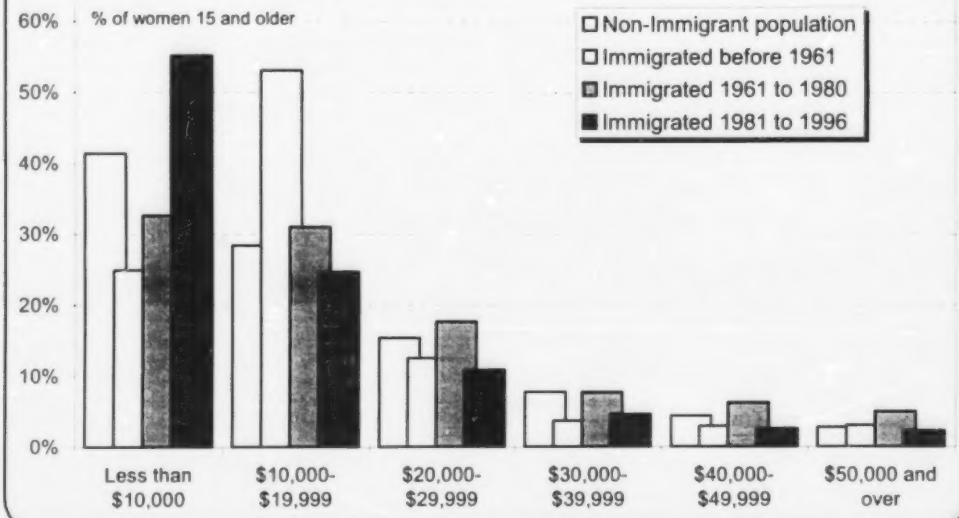
The majority of those who immigrated before 1961 are seniors. They are more likely to receive money from government transfers and considerably less likely to receive income from employment or "other" sources[8] (see Figure 15). This is a simple consequence of the fact that many receive a substantial portion of their income from the Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security payments.

Figure 17 shows that the majority had 1995 incomes in the $10,000 to $19,000 range. Five percent are below the low income cutoff (LICO) which is often used as an indicator of poverty (see box). Those who came to Canada in the 1960s and 1970s have average incomes well above the provincial average, especially if they are working on a full-time, full-year basis. As a group, they are almost twice as likely as non-immigrant women to earn incomes

*Statistics Canada's Low Income Cutoff*

*The low income cutoff (LICO) is a measure of income inequality. Based on family size and geographic location, it is the income level below which a family would be expected to spend an above-average portion of their income on basic necessities such as food, clothing, and shelter. As an example, the LICO in 1995 for a city the size of Regina was $14,473 for a person living alone and $22,500 for a family of three.*

**Figure 17: Distribution of Personal Incomes in 1995, Adult Women in Saskatchewan**




of $50,000 or more. And yet this group of women is almost as likely to have incomes below the low income cutoff as women born in Canada (11% compared with 16%).

The group of women who are recent immigrants also have an above-average proportion of their income from employment. But that employment income is in relatively low paying jobs so their average incomes are below the levels for other immigrant women. This remains true among the relatively few who work on a full-time full-year basis. Figure 17 shows that over one-half (55%) of women who immigrated between 1981 and 1996 have annual incomes in 1995 below $10,000.

**Figure 18: Incidence of Low Income**

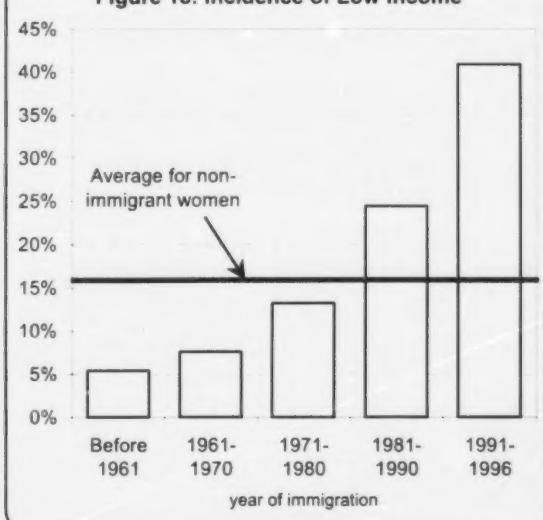


Figure 18 shows that over 40% of women who immigrated between 1991 and 1996 lived in households with an annual income in 1995 that was below the low income cutoff. This compares with 24% of those who immigrated between 1981 and 1990. Women who immigrated before 1970 are much less likely to live in households with annual incomes below the low income cutoff.

Immigrant women in Saskatchewan have a noticeably different experience depending on when they moved to Canada. It remains to be seen if those who came to Canada in the 1980s and 1990s will, over time, achieve the income levels of those who came in the 1960s and 1970s. As noted above, recent immigrants, in spite of their higher education levels, are concentrated in low paying industry groups.

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*Notes*

*Source: These data are derived from the 1996 Statistics Canada Census. Questions about immigration are on the "long form" of the Census so they are, in effect, based on a 20% sample of households. Only persons living in private dwellings receive the long form so these statistics exclude those living in so-called "collective" dwellings including, for example, prisons, special care homes, hotels, homes for the disabled, and group homes.*

1. *Non-permanent residents are women who, at the time of the Census, held a student or employment authorization, Minister's permit, or were refugee claimants, as well as family members living with them.*

2. *The Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) for Regina and Saskatoon include both the cities and the surrounding "bedroom" communities and rural municipalities. In the case of Regina, the CMA includes, for example, the RM of Sherwood, Lumsden, Balgonie, White City, Edenwold, Pense and their respective rural municipalities. In the case of Saskatoon, the CMA includes, for example, Osler, Martensville, Delisle, Dundurn, Colonsay, and the associated rural munipalities.*

3. *The visible minority population includes "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour". This includes Chinese, South Asian, Black, Arab, West Asian, Filipino, Southeast Asian, Latin American, Japanese, Korean, and Pacific Islander.*

4. *The "mother tongue" is the first language learned in childhood and still understood. The "home language" is the language spoken most often at home. Language knowledge refers to the ability to conduct a conversation.*

5. *The "participation rate" is the percentage of the adult population (15 & older) that is in the labour force, that is, either employed or unemployed.*

6. *The "unemployment rate" is the percentage of the labour force that is unemployed.*

7. *Employment by industry and occupation are based on the number of women in the "experienced labour force" . The industry and occupation are recorded for the current job or, if not employed, the most recent job in the past 18 months.*

8. *Government transfers include, for example, social assistance, employment insurance, disability benefits, the Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security, and Workers' Compensation benefits. "Other" income includes, for example, investment income, private pension income, income from rental properties, inheritances, and alimony payments.*